

Nonfatal Injuries to the Back and Other Body Parts

In the construction industry, injuries and illnesses causing days away from work affect the back more than any other body part (chart 41a). The same is true for all industries combined, where back injuries make up 25% of the total.

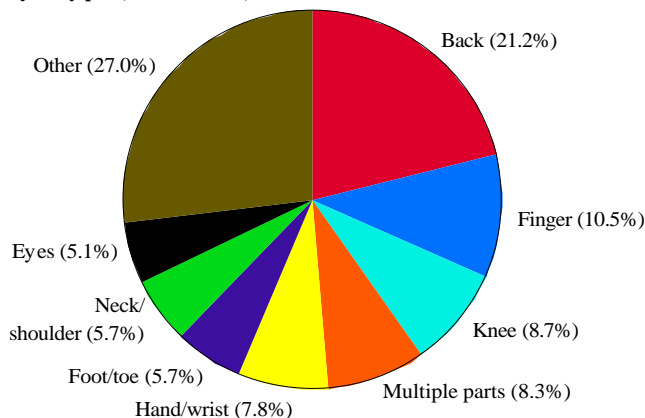
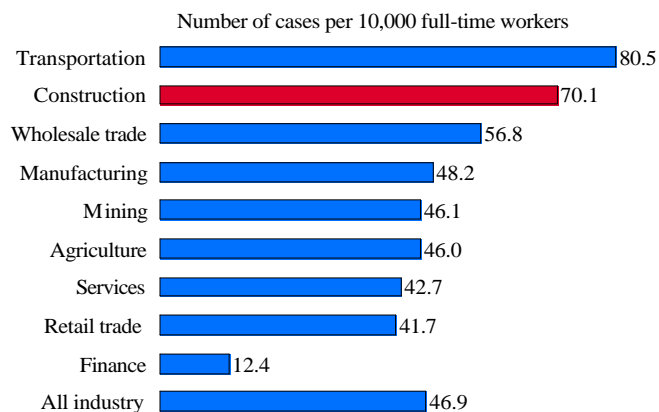
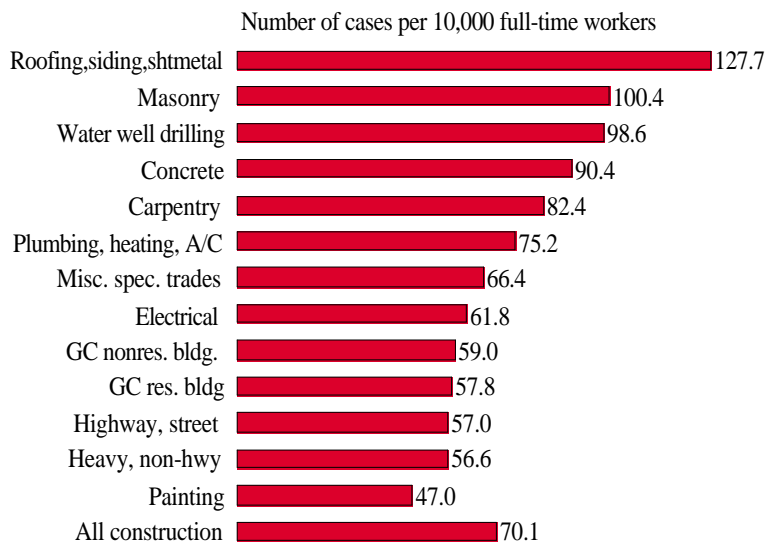
Although construction wage-and-salary workers make up less than 6% of the labor force, serious back injuries and illnesses in construction are 9.7% of back injuries and illnesses for all industries. In 1999, there were 40,998 reported back injuries and illnesses with days away from work in construction, compared with 424,251 for all industries.

The rate of back injuries resulting in days away from work for construction is exceeded only by the rate for transportation (chart 41b). In 1999, the rate of back injuries in construction

was 1.5 times the rate for private-sector industries. The rate of reported back injuries fell by 29% from 1995 to 1999 for construction and for all industries (Bureau of Labor Statistics web site www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdnew.htm, table R6, 1999 and table R6, 1995).

Within construction, the rate of back injuries causing days away from work is highest for the roofing industry, which exceeds the rate for all construction by 1.8 times (chart 41c).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports injuries and illnesses together, but in construction illnesses make up less than 2% of the reports and do not substantially affect construction injury rates that are calculated.

41a. Distribution of nonfatal injuries and illnesses with days away from work, by body part, construction, 1999**41b. Rate of back injuries and illnesses resulting in days away from work, by industry, 1999****41c. Rate of back injuries and illnesses with days away from work, by construction industry, 1999**

Note: All charts - Data cover private sector only and exclude self-employed. BLS provides the data for injuries and illnesses combined, but illnesses make up less than 2% of the total in construction.

Chart 41a - "Other" body parts affected include head, abdomen, elbow, lower leg, and body systems. Nonfatal illnesses affecting body systems include heat exhaustion and skin diseases. In 1999, back injuries and illnesses with days away from work totaled 40,998 in construction and 424,251 for all industries.

Charts 41b and 41c - Because many construction workers work part time at construction, safety and health statistics are defined in terms of full-time equivalents to allow comparisons with other industries. Full-time work is defined as 2,000 hours worked per year.

Source: Chart 41a - Bureau of Labor statistics web site www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdnew.htm, table R2, 1999.

Charts 41b and 41c - Bureau of Labor statistics web site www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdnew.htm, table R6, 1999.